

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL WORKSOP
CITY OF COLLEGE STATION
JULY 25, 2012

STATE OF TEXAS §
 §
COUNTY OF BRAZOS §

Present:

Nancy Berry

Council:

Blanche Brick
Jess Fields, absent
Karl Mooney
Katy-Marie Lyles, arrived at 4:15 p.m.
Julie Schultz
Dave Ruesink

City Staff:

David Neeley, City Manager
Kathy Merrill, Deputy City Manager
Frank Simpson, Deputy City Manager
Carla Robinson, City Attorney
Sherry Mashburn, City Secretary

1. Call to Order and Announce a Quorum is Present

With a quorum present, the Special Workshop of the College Station City Council was called to order by Mayor Nancy Berry at 3:12 p.m. on Wednesday, July 25, 2012 in the Council Chambers of the City of College Station City Hall, 1101 Texas Avenue, College Station, Texas 77842.

2. Presentation and discussion of results of a formal College Station Citizen Survey recently commissioned by the City Manager's Office.

Jay Socol, Director of Public Communications, reported the last survey done in College Station was in 2005. The purpose of the citizen assessment study was to identify key measures of quality of life, public safety and service delivery. The input from citizens will assist the City Council in resource allocation, budget and policy decisions.

Colin Killian, Public Communications Office, reported on how the study was conducted and the data collected. The sampling plan included a mailed survey to 8,000 households proportionately distributed within four geographic areas. Households had the option of completing the mailed

survey or completing the survey online via the City website. A total of 342 responses were received via the mailed survey and 511 from the online survey. The margin of error of this sample size (853) at a 95% confidence level is plus or minus 3.4%. Colin then presented detailed survey tables. Providing public safety (police, fire) received the highest importance/quality ratings for City services, followed closely by street and road maintenance. Service prioritization indicates the City will need to maintain spending for public safety, managing trash and recycling, providing pathways (sidewalks, trails), and maintaining the appearance of parks, landscapes and facilities. Additional dollars may be required for maintaining streets/roads, attracting businesses and jobs, managing traffic congestion, enforcing traffic laws, programs to retain/support existing businesses, managing storm water drainage, and code enforcement services.

Key findings related to quality of life indicate that 92% of respondents are very or somewhat likely to recommend College Station as a place to live. When asked what they valued most from living in College Station, respondents listed:

- 25% - Small town feel but has quality services of a larger city (entertainment, cultural, religious, etc.)
- 23% - Friendly people, family friendly, good quality of life
- 20% - Quality education opportunities (schools, Texas A&M University), college atmosphere, proximity to TAMU
- 15% - Safety, low crime.

Regarding what type of retail/commercial development is desired, respondents answered:

- 17% - More up-scale retail/restaurants including specialty retail and better diversity of sit-down restaurants
- 13% - Attract businesses - technology, manufacturing, health care and light industry business to new commercial/office developments
- 13% - Retail "Village" or "Town Center" type retail with entertainment and leisure venues that is family friendly (including a "downtown" College Station utilizing a mixed use concept).

In answer to "If you could change one thing about College Station", 17% of the respondents replied they would like to see traffic congestion addressed, stricter traffic laws, and to bring back red light cameras.

About half (58%) of respondents reported they have had contact with a city employee in the past 12 months. Of those, a majority (89%) of respondents who had contact with a city employee said their courtesy, knowledge and responsiveness was excellent or good. One third of respondents feel crime in College Station is decreasing or staying the same. However, half (51%) of respondents feel crime in College Station is increasing.

A majority of respondents prefer to utilize multiple methods to get information about local city government. The three most important methods of communication were the local newspaper, local TV stations, and the City website. 27% of responses praised the City's communication efforts and feel they do an outstanding job. 14% saw the need for an email newsletter with voluntary sign up with information on past/future events.

On a four-star value rating, 80% of respondents rated College Station a “3” value or higher, which is comparable to cities of similar size. More than one-third (37%) rated College Station a value of “4”.

Respondent demographics indicate survey respondents are highly educated. 78% have completed college or have a graduate or advanced degree. 81% of respondents live in single-family homes, while the remaining respondents live in an apartment, town home, apartment or duplex.

Conclusions drawn from the survey indicate that College Station, as a city and community, is highly valued by its residents with regard to quality of life, quality of City services, the direction the City is headed as a community, and the overall value of services for the tax dollars they pay. Residents value College Station most because it is a clean, progressive, quiet and safe community with an abundance of core services while maintaining the small town feel. The top priorities with which the City should continue emphasis (as rated by the citizens) includes public safety, managing trash and recycling, providing pathways (sidewalks, trails), and maintaining appearance of parks, landscapes and facilities. Citizens rated several areas for improvement, such as maintaining streets and roads, attracting businesses and jobs, managing traffic congestion, enforcing traffic laws, etc. Citizens rated other services as less important and needing less emphasis, such as providing a variety of recreation programs, special events, and library services.

No action was required by Council.

3. Presentation, possible action. and discussion regarding the Council's Strategic Plan (2012).

Bob Cowell, Executive Director of Development Services, presented this item as a mid-year review. The vision was established through multi-year Comprehensive Planning effort through a community vision, indentifying the type of College Station we want now and into the future. He briefly reviewed the Council’s Mission Statement and six key initiatives. He reminded Council that last year we reset the planning calendar so that the retreat and strategic plan update would occur prior to the budget preparation by staff. This adjustment means that even though we have talked quite a bit about the strategic plan, we are working with the same plan for a longer time than will be the case going forward. Under the revised schedule, January/February will be when the retreat and update occur. May will be when the Departments update their business/service plans in anticipation of budget submittals. July will serve as the mid-year review before heading into budget workshops. August will be budget workshops; the City Manager’s budget is built around the strategic direction provided by Council at its retreat, and the Budget will be approved in September. Quarterly reports on the strategic plan will be provided by the City Manager with the focus on performance measures, which also are being updated. Bob then provided some examples of some of the strategies/actions that have been initiated or completed based on the plan to demonstrate the link of these actions to the plan as a real guide to what actually gets done. There are still a few items pending, and one or two that have not been discussed at all, such as cost recovery policies.

Staff requested affirmation from the Council that the plan is accurate and is working. The Budget (based on this plan) will come forward in August, and then we will move to department plans. In January, we will have more in-depth discussions of the strategic plan update.

No action was required from Council.

4. Executive Session

In accordance with the Texas Government Code §551.074-Personnel, City Council convened into Executive Session at 4:25 p.m. on Wednesday, July 25, 2012 in order to continue discussing matters pertaining to:

A. Deliberation on the appointment, employment, evaluation, reassignment, duties, discipline, or dismissal of a public officer; to wit:

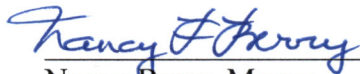
- City Manager

The Executive Session adjourned at approximately 5:35 p.m. on Wednesday, July 25, 2012.

No action was required from Executive Session.

5. Adjournment

MOTION: There being no further business, Mayor Berry adjourned the Special Workshop of the College Station City Council at approximately 5:38 p.m. on Wednesday, July 25, 2012.


Nancy Berry, Mayor

ATTEST:


Sherry Mashburn, City Secretary